

Chasmanthium latifolium

River or Wild Oats, Northern Sea Oats





Tried and True

Native Plant Selection

for the Mid-Atlantic

This beautiful, tall woodland grass* grows in upright clumps and produces bamboo-like leaves that are held perpendicular at intervals on smooth, round culms (stems). Panicles stand well above the foliage with drooping, eye-catching, oat-like spikelets that rustle and shimmer in the breeze.



| Grass / Sedge | Clumps, Maturing Spikelets, Culms in Winter | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Height: 2–5 feet |  | | |
| Spread: 2–3 feet | | | |
| Bloom Color: Green then tan | | | |
| Characteristics | | | |
| Tall perennial grass in upright clumps |  |  | |
| Alternate , arching, glabrous , bright green leaves | | | |
| Culms terminate in nodding panicles of flat, oat-like spikelets maturing from green to pink to tan/copper | | | |
| Fruit: a dark red grain. Fall leaves: gold to copper | | | |
| Can spread aggressively by rhizomes and seeds |  | | |
| Attributes | | | |
| Tolerates shade, salt, and Black Walnut | | | |
| No serious pests or diseases; deer rarely damage | | | |
| Seasonal interest of changing seed heads | | | |
| Can be used in cut and dried arrangements | | | |
| Larval host for Common Roadside Skipper | | | |
| Growing and Maintenance Tips | Excellent Replacement for | | |
| Soil Requirements : Average, well-drained | Bambusa , Phyllostachys , Pseudosasa - Bamboo | | |
| Light Requirements : Sun, Partial Shade | Cortaderia seelloana - Pampas Grass | | |
| Water Requirements : Dry, Moist, Wet | Melilotus officinalis - Sweetclover | | |
| Fall color brighter in sun but requires more water | Miscanthus sinensis - Chinese Silver Grass | | |
| Site carefully—may be difficult to remove once established; to control spread cut to ground early fall; to enjoy seed heads cut back early spring | Pennisetum alopecuroides - Fountain Grass | | |
| Use in borders, in rain gardens, and to control erosion in shady areas; looks best planted in groups, lovely on slopes | *It is native to DC, historical in the DE Piedmont, and widely scattered in MD. In PA, it is rare along the lower Susquehanna River and a few scattered sites in the south. In VA, it is locally common throughout the mountains (low elevations), Piedmont and inner Coastal Plain and rare in the outer Coastal Plain. It is native to NoVA, except to Prince William County. | | |
| Hardiness : USDA Zones 3–8 | | | |

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Mary Free and Elaine Mills (bottom left), Glencarlyn Garden